

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. DENNIS REHBERG**

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2001*

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained due to travel delays and was not able to cast a vote on rollcall No. 16. Mr. Speaker, had I been present and not unavoidably delayed I would have voted "yea" on this important House Concurrent Resolution.

IN MEMORY OF CLARENCE  
MARVIN BLACKMAN, SR.**HON. BOB ETHERIDGE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2001*

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the life of Clarence Marvin Blackman, Sr. of Benson, North Carolina, who died December 20, 2000. In his passing, Benson lost one of its most outstanding citizens and a man who was instrumental in growing the town to its present state. He was the kind of citizen who had the best interest of his community in mind before he made any decision.

As one of his friends put it, "If anything good happened in Benson, it was a safe bet that C.M. Blackman would be one of the people behind it."

Born in Johnston County, Blackman was the son of the late Frank and Callie Altman Blackman. He came to Benson in 1934 to open a farm supply and grocery store with Alton Massengill. He later bought out his partner and in subsequent years added an insurance agency to the business he already owned. In 1950, Blackman and four other Benson men founded the Benson Livestock Market, putting a market in easy reach of the hundreds of farmers in Harnett and Johnston counties.

A man of great energy and widespread interests, Blackman served as a town commissioner for 29 years and was mayor from 1955 to 1959. He was named Citizen of the Year in 1962 and was a charter member of the Benson Lions and the Benson Businessman's Club, which later became the Benson Area Chamber of Commerce. He was also a member of the Benson Junior Order.

After being appointed to the Board of Directors of the Benson Annual Sing in the early 1940's, Blackman served as assistant manager. He also served as announcer for the competitions.

Blackman loved his family and friends and business associates. He hosted a Christmas breakfast for them every year for 31 years. In 1999, the breakfast was named in his honor as the Annual C.M. Blackman Christmas Breakfast.

Blackman's survivors include his wife, Pernella Massengill Blackman; a daughter, Jackie B. Smith of Fayetteville; two sons, C.M. Blackman, Jr., of Raleigh and Danny Blackman of Dunn; six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, C.M. Blackman, Sr. used every minute of his long and productive life to

make the world a better place. He was a respected and successful businessman, a dedicated public servant, and a great North Carolinian. It is fitting that we honor him and his family today.

## INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO REPEAL THE 2-PERCENT EXCISE TAX ON PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

**HON. CLIFF STEARNS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2001*

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the United States is blessed with a deep spirit of philanthropy. Charitable organizations serve the interests of both the individual and the community. Private foundations, in particular, have made a measurable difference in the lives of Americans. From access to public libraries, developing the polio vaccine, and even leading in the creation of Emergency 911, each and every American has experienced the benefits of the tireless efforts of these foundations.

Currently, there are approximately 47,000 foundations in the United States. In 1998, foundations gave away an estimated \$22 billion in grants. These foundations were also forced to give the Federal Government a grant of \$500 million in 1999.

Under current law, nonprofit private foundations generally must pay a 2-percent excise tax on their net investment income. This requirement was originally enacted in the Tax Reform Act of 1969 as a way to offset the cost of Government audits of these organizations. However, since 1990, the number of IRS audits on private foundations has decreased from 1200 to 191. Yet, excise collections have grown from \$204.3 million in 1990 to \$499.6 million in 1999.

In addition, private foundations are bound by a 5-percent distribution rule. Foundations must make annual qualifying distributions for charitable purposes equal to roughly 5-percent of the fair market value of the foundation's net investment assets. The required 2-percent excise tax—payable to the IRS—actually counts as a credit to the 5-percent distribution rule.

So, what we have is a private foundation making a charitable grant to the Federal Government every year. Now, the last time I looked, the Federal Government was not in any dire need of charitable contributions. In fact, in the next 10 years, the Federal budget surplus is projected to be \$5.7 trillion. In 2002 alone, we are projected to have a \$231 billion surplus. Therefore, I believe that Americans have been more than "charitable" in giving the Government their hard-earned dollars. It is time that we begin the process of returning that money to the people.

President Bush is working to accomplish that goal with his reduction in tax rates, and allowing for the increased use of charitable deductions and credits. My bill goes one step further, it gives those charitable organizations relief from wasting \$500 million on the Federal Government and, instead, giving the money to those who truly need it.

I would also like to emphasize that former President Clinton proposed a reduction in the

excise tax in his fiscal year 2001 budget. The Treasury Department noted, "Lowering the excise tax rate for all foundations would make additional funds available for charitable purposes." Common sense dictates that the elimination of this tax would spur additional charitable giving.

I want to thank Congressman CRANE for his support on this bill and ask our colleagues to lend their support as well.

VETERANS' OPPORTUNITIES ACT  
OF 2001**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2001*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, today I am introducing on behalf of Mr. Evans, Mr. Hayworth, Mr. Reyes and myself the Veterans' Opportunities Act of 2001. This measure would make a number of needed improvements to VA benefits and services including memorial affairs, life insurance, the means-tested pension program, automobile and adaptive equipment and specially adapted housing for seriously disabled veterans. Five different transition and outreach services to servicemembers, veterans, and disabled veterans and their dependents are included in the bill, as well as provisions affecting various veterans' educational assistance programs.

My colleagues and I have also consulted with Armed Services Committee Chairman BOB STUMP and Ranking Democratic Member IKE SKELTON to make certain time-sensitive technical amendments to certain servicemembers' and veterans' education provisions in current law.

Mr. Speaker, veterans' benefits and services indeed are "earned opportunities." They are earned through selfless and often hazardous service to our nation, during war and peace alike. Doing right by America's sons and daughters who have worn the military uniform is firmly ingrained in our national values, our national pride, and our sense of moral responsibility. On behalf of my fellow original cosponsors, I would like to highlight just a few of the 17 provisions in the bill.

Sadly, our nation loses about 1,500 World War II veterans each week. The Department of Veterans Affairs projects that the current death rate for our veterans will continue to increase, peaking in 2008. Our bill would increase the burial and funeral expenses for veterans whose death is service-connected from \$1,500 to \$2,000; increase burial and funeral expenses for veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities from \$300 to \$500; and increase the burial plot allowance from \$150 to \$300. The amount payable for these benefits has remained constant for many years in spite of inflation. The purchasing power associated with these provisions still is limited and I consider these provisions as a starting point for further improvements. I note that VA continues to maintain some 119 veterans cemeteries and 26 States participate in VA's State Cemetery Grants program. Both of these programs provide a final resting place for our veterans,